THE

THEATRIC COUNT,

A

TRAGIC COMEDY,

IN

FIVE ACTS.

FROM THE

ORGOGLIO CUPITOSO,

CONTE TEATRINO,

OF

GONZAGO BICCHIERI.

ADAPTED

FOR REPRESENTATION ON THE ENGLISH STAGE,

LONDON:

Printed by J. G. Barnard, Skinner Street;

PUBLISHED BY SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

Price Half-a-Crown.

1809.

TO

THE SUBSCRIBERS

TO THE

NEW NATIONAL THEATRE,

THIS PLAY

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

ADVERTISEMENT.

After the partial destruction of the principal Venetian Theatre, nearly at the beginning of the last century—the Owners, having refitted it in a costly and superb style, applied to and received from the Doge an exclusive privilege. Immediately on receiving this, they imposed an additional Tax upon the people. This by the people was resisted with all their might: by the Owners, supported by means deemed infractive of the Spirit of Liberty which that state enjoyed. Many struggles were made for the abolishment of the Imposition, the end of which was the withdrawing the privilege granted. Theatres after then abounded, and a general corruption of manners followed. The writers for the stage, during the time of its arbitrary exactment, employed their pens against the corruption and abuses of it; and amongst other productions was the Original, from which the present Translation is adapted. The similitude of the occasion is strong. The reader will wonder to find passages parodial of some of the finest in the English Drama; but as in the original was much parody of Mestastasio and Italian dramatists, the translator could ot preserve the spirit of the original better n by parodying passages that were parall r own Bards.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ORGOGLIO CUPITOSO, CONTE TEATRINO.

ENRIQUEZ il Debolletto FIGLUO FURBESCO de la CASA.	Directors.

IAGO, a principal Actor.

LA CONTESSA GONFIEZZA REGINA TRAGICA, Sister of ORGOGLIO.

Actors.

Scene Shifters.

LEORDO. AGOSTO. GIUGLIO.	Venetian Gentlemen.

Spectators.

Gentlemen.

Doge.

The Council.

Goaler, Officers of the Municipal Hall and of the Police.

PUGILLO. SAMULLO. PUGNO. BELCHRO. HOLLANDO. KROBBO. GOLFO. MANDOZZO. BRACCHIO. CRAVNO.	Bravos.

Gondoliers.

Venetian Jews.

THE THEATRIC COUNT.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A private Apartment in the Theatre.*

The COUNT, *entering.*

NOW is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by our builder's speed;
And all the clouds, that lower'd upon *our* House,
Deep in the ruins of our old one buried.
Now be our brows entwin'd with thyrsal leaves;*
Our strolling clothes hung up for monuments;
Our onion luncheons chang'd for jovial dinners;
Our toilsome journeyings to o'erflowing seasons:
Grim visag'd poverty hath smooth'd her brow,
And now, instead of mounting damn'd post-chaise,
To win the plaudits of the gaping loon—
Once more within our own New Theatre,
We stalk with trumpet, clarion, kettle-drum.—
But I who am not made for pedling parts,
To sooth, and please the jilt, the public voice,
I, who am proudly stampt, and want the obsequy
To fawn, and bow, and beg the audience favuor—

* He was a votary of Bacchus.

Why I—at this our time of raising need,
Have no way how to pass the gag upon them;
Unless, by whining of the ruin'd purse,
And descanting upon our large expense.
Then—since, I cannot play the lowly suitor
To win by fair, and smooth, well spoken strain,
I am determin'd to play the master,
And scorn the factious clamours they may raise:
Papers I have, and hand-bills spread awide,
With long imposing tale of our improvement,
Shewing the vast expences we've incurr'd:
And, if the people be as keen of plays,
As I am fond of splendour and large salaries,
This very day our price shall be wound up;
And this fair phœnix, Fate! in spite of thee,
Shall of Orgoglio's House the fortune be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul—Iago comes.

Enter Iago.

Welcome Iago:—once again we meet,
Within our proper sphere to night to shine;
Not, as these late months, voyaging far and near,
To gain a few nights' salaries here and there:
To pick a lousy, scanty feeding, up,
Gather'd from hands, that, had we here with us,
Might deem it honour to behead our lights,
Whilst we, the sovereigns, sat in state above.

Iago. True! such like Managers, as we must meet,
As, on this life's large stage we bustle on,
Are, I'll be bound, not more Orgoglio's taste,
Than are *all Managers*, I meet, to mine.

Count. What think you, shall we do to-night?

Iago. I'll do my best, let every one do theirs;
All act their part as well—

Count. Pshaw!—you're dull—

I mean—shall we succeed—What? do you hear—
Will this advance on our part——?

Iago. Faith, I doubt
But you'll have opposition.

Count. That I fear:
Fear, said I? No—I apprehend: not fear.

Iago. Your house seems fill'd to overflowing—now:
Tho' but few moments have the doors been open,
And peaceable withal, considering—

Count. Why, at first blush, the beauty of the house
Must keep them mute for decency.

Iago. But hear
The tempest growls a little—

Count. 'Tis for you.

[*Distant clamour of the audience.*

Iago. Well—ring the bell.

Count. There—Ho!—the music, strike—
The drum shall drown the shout; the pipe, the hiss;
And the deep bass's rugged note, the groan.

Iago. Not so—the clamour rises far above.

[*Noise increases.*

Enter ENRIQUEZ.

Count. Well, sir—so—we have opposition—ha?

Enriq. Aye, sir—it threats a mighty storm bye and bye.

Count. Well—well—the storm shall spend its fury!
He's a foolish traveller, that ventures
Forth, from his own choice when the thunder rolls:
They'll tire apace.

Enriq. Sir, they're impatient grown
To see the curtain.

[*Clamour increases fast.*

Iago. What say you to it, sir ?—
Count. Dare you face this ?
Iago. Aye—I have met as bad.
Count. Not on these boards ?
Iago. On their precedent martyrs.
Count. Is it the time ?
Enriq. Yes, sir, the time is full.
Count. Up the curtain—
Iago. Now we'll see the sport.
Count. When you will.
Enriq. Sir, when you—
Count. I come.

[*Exit.*

Iago. This hurts not me, the thunder-bolt can't harm—
I'm the conductor only, and am safe,
While all the lightning I pass off to him.

SCENE II.

The Count's private Room.

The COUNT *and* ENRIQUEZ *returning.*

Count. I know none better that can bear the brunt,
And 'tis a brunt to bear—I counted on it—
But how ? They greet him with applause.

[*Thundering applause.*

Enriq. 'Tis a short triumph—
Count. Well !—
Enriq. Sir, 'twas a short applause.
Count. Is the house full ?

[*Groans and clamour.*

Enriq. Cramm'd! 'twould be hard to find another space.
Count. And took much money?
Enriq. Not so well for that:
Many have got admission to oppose.
Count. Who are the traitors that——?
Enriq. A many have,
For in such general distributions giv'n,
It could not fail, but many must fall there,
Where the resistance would be strongest made.
Count. That we'll guard against hereafter.

Enter the COUNTESS.

Welcome!
Fears not my Sister to encounter him,
Hark how the monster bellows at Iago?
Countess. Surely they dare not bellow so at us!
And fears Orgoglio to encounter them?
Count. I fear them—no! They'll find out that anon—
'Tis tho' in truth the very heaviest storm
I e'er assay'd to stem—yet we'll not faint—
All children sleep when they are tired of crying.
They kept me waiting on their silence long—
But as they strove their utmost not to hear,
I play'd them the exordium—'t did as well—

Enter IAGO.

Hast thou escap'd with life?
Iago. Marry! Behold--
Escape? the very thing that gave me life;
I never play'd with half so good a glee:
Zounds! had they held their tongues, it had been dull;
But roaring so around—I seem'd as tho'

I were transported from my very self
And made the character, I should but seem
'Sblood! their shouting was an inspiration,
I fancied it applause, I felt and play'd to it—
Gods—'twas enough to make an ass an actor!
Count. Sister, you're called—Ho—
[*Exit Countess.*
Iago. Frighten me forsooth—
Oh! how it did my old heart's cockles good;
How I enjoy to see an audience pleased:
Tho' for the hearing, they might all have been
A pack of pillar'd rogues, and yet have heard as well
Faith! but they saw me, and I made it tell—
O! with what soul! I thrust old Hal to Hell!—
[*Very tumultuous clamour and groaning.*
Count. And dare they treat our sister thus?
Without.)—Help! Hartshorn! Ho!—
Countess without. Our Brother hither send—
Count. Bear her in hither—damn the dastard crew—
To hoot a woman, and our sister too!—
[*The Countess enters, faint, but recovers.*
Countess. Who would have thought Venetian audience thus
Should, for a few Soldi *, make such bearish fuss,
And hoot and whistle their own favorites down,
As tho' we pick'd the pockets of the town.
Revenge—Revenge—fall brother, but not yield;
Let pride support my brother in the field.
Bid them defiance—stick to your advance—
I'd keep from spite that Songstress out of France—
Were it naught else—And let the rascals flounce—
I'd have the law such disaffection trounce—

* Small Coin, 1-3d. of a penny.

We for their punishment shall not stay here,
Engag'd at higher price, elsewhere to appear:
Count. 'Tis as we mean—Ev'n, as you just advis'd,
To guide ourselves.—Yet, Enriquez, I doubt
It were as well to let the Frenchman go—
We have such good excuse—and then the sum!
That's the best reason for ourselves—but come—
The second act requires us down below.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Behind the Scenes of the Theatre.

Scene Shifters.

Enter the Count.

[*Clamour still with hisses, hoots and groans.*
Curse on the pit, ill-manner'd, turn the back—
Scene Shifters. Yes, sir, but they sat down, quite peaceable between,
And took their hats off, just as if the play
Had then been playing; when the drop scene rose,
Then up they got with it, and put their hats on—
As you see, sir.
Count. To your own business—
Now I like the spirit, tho' I hate the cause:
It's National—Venetian—So far—Good.
Had they submitted without some of this,
I had despis'd them for a set of gulls:
They should have had their foreign Songstresses;
They had deserv'd them richly. As it is—
Now she shall go, yet—they shall not yet know it,

I'll keep them up, awhile at least, and then,
I'll throw the barking dog this bone to gnaw;
'Twill keep his teeth from us a moment.

Scene-shifter. Sir, here's some placards that are going about.

Count. Hum—paltry—rubbish—they're poor—quite poor—
Now this is somewhat better—clamour on!
Cut short the play—and bid the actors do it—
Shorten their speeches—you may leave that scene—
'Twill not be miss'd.

[*To some Actors crossing the Stage.*

Gentlemen, you have now
A fine opportunity for action;
This will shew who among you are actors.
Come, cheer up gentlemen, hear how you are greeted—

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Green Room.—Two Actors entering upon the Stage.

1st. Actor. Fine doing this, a glorious hot night's work!

2d. Actor. Faith, you may say that.

1st. Actor. Cursed quiet tho'!

2d. Actor. They're like your London hackneymen, they stand
And jaw and blackguard you a whole day—and
There it ends all—oh! for a few of us!

1st. Actor. It will come to more—

2d. Actor. And then how staunch,
How stiff he stands, and turns his corners down,

And looks quite cardinalish about the mouth,
And stalks as stately and as unconcerned—

1st. Actor. As though it were no more to him than us.

2d. Actor. No more to him! a single jule* a night
Now's a charity to us—and then when
Pray shall we be rais'd—he gets his double ducats—
We get jules—a cursed few of them tho'!
Oh! is it us that raise? expences! faith—
A conjuror might tell whose most expensive—
And troth it don't require a manager to know it.

1st. Actor. How all the rest enjoy it—

2d. Actor. Here he comes.

Enters the COUNT, ENRIQUEZ, FIGLUO, JAGO, *Actors, Men and Women.*

Count. Noise—noise—more clamour still—the curtain down—
Still it keeps up—what would they?

Enriq. They call you.

Figluo. The clamour is for you, sir—

Count. Let them clamour!
What? shall I go—and beg—demean myself—
And crouch—and kneel—and sue the rabble throng—
The stinking rabble with their greasy breath—
Enough to choak an ordinary man?
How then shall I bear it! no, let them roar on:—

[*More clamour without, and calling for the Count.*

Split all your throats with bawling—I'll not come—

* A small coin, worth six-pence.

Enriq. You must—
Count. What you must to me?
1*st. Actor.* Sir, it is needful—
2*d. Actor.* We shall else have riot.
Iago. Indeed you ought to pay them some attention.
Count. What shall I say—sirs, you shall have your will—
Pray gentle sirs, sweet audience—have peace—
We will perform you gratis, we're your servants—
Give us what pay you will, let us but serve—
And sneak, and simper, to be hiss'd and damn'd?
Damn'd by a tasteless mob—a stingy mob—
A pit, that dar'd insult our sister too?
Perish this tongue, before it learns to fawn:
But come we'll face them—see their terror—

[*Exit.*

1*st. Actor.* Listen.
Enriq. Hark! they receive him with applause.

[*Loud applauses mixed with disapprobation.*

2*d. Actor.* But see how scornfully he eyes them:
1*st. Actor.* They like it not.
5*th Actor.* They tell him they don't like it.
Enriq. What does he say? 'st—
1*st. Actor.* What is it ye want?
2*d. Actor.* They speak to him—What says he?
5*th. Actor.* He answers,
"He knows now what it is they want."

[*Great clamouring all this time, and various dissonant instruments.*

Enriq. Again—
5*th. Actor.* Whew—how they din it forth—
1*st. Actor.* See he retires.
2*d. Actor.* Oh what a peal of groans have followed him!

Re-enter the COUNT.

Count. Senseless, Brutal dolts! Gods! that ye have put
Such men as me to be such ideot's sport!
Scene shifter without.)—Sir, they are clambering on the orchestra.
Count. Let down the traps—open the Secret-Doors—
Bring forth the Branches—Bid the engines play—
Where are the officers—a laggart crew?
Set them all forward on the stage—Some one
Run to the Hall of Justice, bring the Magistrates—
The Riot hath begun—the hubbub ripens—
We shall have mischief—quick—bid them—blast them!
Friends, see the women safe—away.
Scene Shifters. Sir, Sir,
The officers are driven from the stage.
Actors. They are ashamed—
Count. We'll read the Riot Act—
And then by Law secured and firmly back'd—
We'll bid defiance to the lawless crew—
They that oppose our force, shall clearly rue—
Stop, Stop their preaching—Damn them—Clear the House—
Each take his arms—Come men—your courage rouse—
Oh—Silly, stingy, scurvy, senseless elves,
In sinking us, you sink your very selves.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I. The Count's private Room.

The Count *is discovered sitting in his chair, with a Placard in his hand.*

Yet—yet—not satisfied?—What would they
more?
A puling, croaking, discontented pack:
Curse on the placard, and the writer of it!
What is it to them, what may the minors be?
Surely enough if we're acquainted with them:
They have the wholes—the substance—
The grand receipts—expenditure—and saving—
The dividends of profits—What—if these
And but these years the retrospect has been?
Those seasons are as much as need be known:
'Tis not for them to read—thus minors grew—
Thus profits flourished antecedent then—
And thus the value of the thing increased—
Enough, it did increase: we, that experienced,
Found it.—Shall we reap nought from privilege?
Sunk in the flames, one house has perished;
We have raised up this—splendid, beautiful,
Convenient, chaste—and merit we no thanks—
Shall we sell taste for nothing—and act too?
Shall merchants be enrich'd—shall lands enhance—
And shall our property, for ever tied,
Shackled, because 'tis privileg'd, ever stick
At its first cost in value? Rather, why
May not as well, we—as such meaner men,
Train'd up and bred in money-making way,
Practis'd in multiplying—share the wealth,

A generous people liberally bestow
On them, that please them most? shall our talent,
Wrapt in a napkin, lie—while their's increase,
Adding an hundred fold? What is to us
The calculation speculatists make
About our profits,—what they are, we know;
What we would have them, we would not, they knew:
Nor shall they one, or the other, ever know.
Each hog his apple! these have found a stone,
And think, because 'tis painted like—it is—
Why, let them break their teeth, if they will gnaw—
They are the losers by it, and not we—
It was the viper bled and not the file.
We were indeed—a poltroon spirit rogue
To give account to those that wish'd us ill—
Are we to blame, that when the Doge consented
To the mob's asking, we selected friends—?
Their search was strict—yet, who shall judge the length
Of needful expence, or convenient salary—?
That all was spent, they saw—what could they more,
And not be satisfied—?

Enter Enriquez *and* Furbesco.

Furb. So—Enriquez—we are to have another opening—?
Enriq. Another closing rather I expect—
Furb. Fear not, the nice adjusted harmony
That formerly accompanied the song
Will now be wanting—they have ev'n begun
A symptom of it—discontent is full,
And wrath, like venom in the serpent's tooth,

Waits on their lips the rising curtain—

Enriq. What will you, sir—should they break forth,
Or treat them as before—or sue them mild—
And shew them courtesy—?

Count. I know not what;
I am almost distract—

Furb. Hear—they begin—

Enriq. Nor their accompaniments forgotten!

Count. Is the house fill'd?

Furb. Quite, but the seats reserv'd.

Count. Our friends too dispos'd properly?

Enriq. Round
The whole house—

Furb. Each tier has got its share.

Count. Who would have thought so little matter would
Have been so cavill'd at?

Enriq. Who, indeed?

Count. When the first night I prais'd the spirit,
I knew but little, what I was praising.
I fear, Furbesco, we shan't get over it;
They'll hold it out to the last.

Enriq. There have not been
So many frankers given.

Furb. I thought not—
'Tis better—as they fill—much better—risk
Them paying, than brought hither without pay,
To damn us.

Count. But come, the curtain draws.

Enriq. Let us descend. [*Exeunt.*

The Count *Solus.*

Oh! that this too, too firm, spirit would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into kindness;
Or that the legislature had not fix'd

Their decree against self-arming—Oh God! oh, God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,
Seems all the use, the end, of our exertion!
'Tis an unletter'd, an unfeeling mob—
A bear-garden—things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this,
But for one single jule*—heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why they would hang on us,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on—and yet, for a few
Paltry piccoli †, damn us, and all our kindred.
Let me not think on it—illiberality,
Thy name is Venice—heaven! a beast, that wants
Discourse of reason, would have submitted quiet.
It is not, nor it cannot come to good,
But break my heart, if I must knuckle under.

Exit.

SCENE II.

Behind the Scenes of the Theatre, and facing to the Audience, two Gentlemen standing—great and vehement noise, accompanied with all kinds of discordant instruments.

1*st Gent.* Babel broke loose, was silence sure to this!
2*d. Gent.* Oh! what a noise.
1*st. Gent.* Such various sorts of notes—
Sure ne'er were heard from human mouths throats.
2*d. Gent.* The Lord preserve our ears—

* Worth six-pence. † Worth 1-36th of a penny

1st. Gent. Never, till now,
Had I a thought, or could conceive the shout
That rent the Pandemonium—the shriek
Of falling angels might be much like this:
Arms, instruments, machines of war all down
Thundering, with hellish and discordant bray
From thousand trumpets, blasting forth despair—
This seems the sort of effort of despair.

2d. Gent. And yet to me it seems most just,
And the complaint well urged, and look you there,
By that placard I rule my judgement.
"*Resign your privilege or your imposition.*"

1st. Gent. Well, of the right we differ—what you hear
Is little to the noise you might have heard,
And may perhaps to night; yet still it drowns the voice—
And makes even tragedy pantomime;
The harlequin might better do for this
Than speaking actors—but—he comes, attend.

Enter the COUNT, *bowing to the Audience; he essays to speak. Noise increases, hisses, groans, and hootings.*

2d. Gent. He'll not get audience.

1st. Gent. Hear him, silence, peace—
How much alter'd now from what the first night,
Then he was Hauteur's self—and now, how mild!—
Had one not seen him then, he might be pitied—
To see him stand, and beg, with cap in hand
An audience of a Babel, whose clos'd ears
Are shut against him—whose mouths open at him—
No sooner one part ceases, but, the rest
With clamouring *peace*, *peace*, raise a noise as loud,

And drown the rest, whose voices rise again,
While the hard rattle fills the vacant shout.
To see a man of mind, standing precative
Thus, for a few soldi * !—

2d. Gent. Then, why not give up?
Though the less price, he'll have the fuller house.

1st. Gent. His pride won't let him.

2d. Gent. Even at the lowest,
'Twould pay him handsomely for management—

1st. Gent. But not afford the actor quite such pay.

2d. Gent. If that's his object, he deserves it all—
No hearing yet.

After much uproar, the tumult sinks into cries of peace—hear—silence.

He advances to the front of the Stage.—Speaks

To the request of the most enlightened,
[*Loud applauses.*
And the most liberal audience of the world,
[*Greater applause.*
We have acceeded.
[*Vehement clamours, and groans of no, no.*
—Hear me, Venetians,—
I do entreat you—
[*Hisses and the tumult increases, till after repeated attempts to speak, he retires.*

2d. Gent. See, see him, he withdraws.

1st. Gent. Spite of the cause, I feel, I pity him.

2d. Gent. He comes this way, he'll pass us—

1st. Gent. Stand, I'll speak,
Perhaps he will not take it far amiss.

* Worth one-third of a penny.

How multifarious are the jargon sounds
That compose this strange harmony.

Count. They are [*Looking at them.*
—Very ingenious—Very ingenious. [*Exit.*

2d. Gent. I hope you pity him—

1st. Gent. Sir, he is
—Very laconic—Very laconic. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Scene the Green Room.

The COUNT *pacing backward and forward in great agitation, pausing sometimes.*

Enriquez, Iago, and many of the Actors in different parts of the Room.

Count. Six wearying nights—I thought the outrageous strength
Of opposition would have worn itself,
And, that content with what we had exposed,
The judgment giv'n would have pacified.
Oh! 'tis a shame, a grand disgrace upon us,
To see theatric Venice so debased,
Rising in opposition to a testoon—
A shabby, pitiful city! what's a testoon?
What—to the purse of those that come to hear us—
And should not we have pay to please their ear?
Who would play well, that were not as well paid—
Shall our profession starve—alone of all—?
That, which is much to us, is naught to them.
Who could play well, that had not fit costume—
And how shall paltry salary afford—?

Shall we sink down among the common herd,
We—whose pretence is every where allow'd
Equal in merit to the highest rank—
And what but merit—measureth the man?
They talk, of lawyers making no such sums,
Of judges' salaries being less than ours—
And should they not be as professions are—
What is a lawyer to an actor—What
The depth of law to depth of tragedy?
Shall not the man that plays the deepest part
Have for his pains and aitches, deepest purse?
Or if by rank revenue ought to rise,
Who should have more than he that plays the king?
Should Infantello hundreds have—we tens—
And should our sister have her *teens* indeed?
She, who three winters hath made each her last—
She, who now the Frenchman is discarded—
Would give one more if she were soothed down
To gratify their admiration.
Can we to underlings afford to give,
To each their merit—keeping for the stock—
Paying ourselves the risk, the rate we ought—
Sinking our just advance?—oh! no!
Had *the thing* stuck to us—we had then lost
All we had giv'n to her. Thus it is
The people serves its faithful servants.
We're not the first, that to their cost have found—
The people always an ungrateful master.

Iago. Hear how they bruit it—
Enriq. 'Tis all, Sir, for you—
Count. Why let them clamour, I will see them damn'd
Before I'll stand—and fawn again—
Iago. Nay, Sir—
Enriq. My good—
Furb. Signor—
Count. What? shall I bear all—

I all the brunt—ask all—demean myself—
You all sit laughing in your sleeves the while?
But so it is—well—I will try once more—
And if they will not hear—why then—
They shall have mercy, after what they've shewn.

SCENE IV.

His own private Room.

As he comes thro' the Door the distant hooting heard.

Enter the COUNT.

Why now, swell billow—and swim Barque!
They will not hear—then they shall not be heard—
Unto the lenient, lenity,—harshness,
Let to the harsh be giv'n—force, to the rude—
To violent, violence—to the lawless, law—
So we will have the prices that we need.
Was it for this, that one whole week was giv'n
And our own word not taken for the truth—?
Was it in vain we paid our squandered ducats,
To loose us from the griping Frenchman's paw—
Did we concede that point, nothing to gain—?
No private tiers; hah! how forsooth! may we
No privacy at theatres? why true—
And then the argument they urge—
Why may not those that love it, sit retir'd?
Who is this lord, his neighbour dares to blame—
May not he have his way? 'tis his own cost—
Why should we refuse money offer'd us—
To please the poor, that cannot so afford?
Better a certain few that pay us well,
Than a precarious many, ill to please.

Think they this specimen of their's will win—?
No private tiers would dare to treat us so.
Nay, more—to them we play what plays we please,
Their anger ne'er shall work to our disease.
Our will we will have yet in spite of fate,
Our tiers too shall remain in their present state—

Enter SCENE-SHIFTER.

Scene-shifter. Sir, the whole body of police expell'd,
The house is all in uproar; against them
The pit gave way, then, rallying, charg'd—
Headlong they fell—all totally driven out—

Count. Leave them alone, themselves awhile to please,
And then, perhaps, they'll walk away in peace.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Count's own apartment.

The Count taking his nap after dinner.

Give me another house—fill full my pockets—
Have mercy, gentlemen—soft, I but dream.
Oh, gnawing avarice, how thou do'st afflict me!
The bottle's empty—is 't not afternoon?
Cold fearful drops stand on my burning flesh!
What do I fear? myself? there's none else by—
Orgoglio is Orgoglio,—I, am I.—
I am—yet hold—I lie, I am not:
Fool, of thyself speak well—fool, do not flatter;
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale;
And every tale condemns my conduct now.
I shall despair—there's no one loves me,
And if I fail—there's none will pity me:—
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself—?
Me thought, that all whom I had sent to prison
Came crowding round my couch, and every one did threat
This evening's vengeance on Orgoglio's head.

Enter FURBESCO.

Furb. Signor.
Count. Who's there?
Furb. 'Tis I, Signor.

Count. Furbesco—I have had a fearful dream.
What think you, will our friends prove true?
Furb. No doubt—
—No doubt, Signor.
Count. By the apostle Paul,
This step we take, tho' we thrive not without,
Hath struck more apprehension to the soul,
Than could the shouts of twenty thousand mobs
Arm'd all with rattles, catcalls, horns and gongs.—
And will none shrink from us?
Furb. Not one, Signor.
Count. Why then we'll see them: are they well advis'd,
And have you spoken of their duty to them?
Furb. They have been lesson'd. And since the last night
We've had their numbers fill'd with sturdy rogues,
Glean'd from the purlieus of our own domain—
Congregate off the streets, and public quays—
Of gondoliers, and warehouse-lurkers: these
By the staunch champions of the gauntlet led—
All sanction'd from a band from the police—
To aid whose weakness only, they appear,
Not seeming to adventure for themselves:
For, back'd by law in this sort, they shall thrive—
And since, we would not have themselves begin,
They shall seem quieters, not rioters;
As if they strove, indignant at the noise
Of the dissatisfied, that come, the peace
And comfort of the well inclined to us
To interrupt.
Count. 'Tis well—we'll speak to them.

SCENE II.

The Stage behind the Scene—Players, &c. passing.

Enter Count, Furbesco, Enriquez, Figluo.

Enriq. The time draws near, the avenues are fill'd.

Count. Come, bustle, bustle—to your several charge—
Our battle's order, we'll dispose ourselves.

Fig. Sir, in this fashion we have ordered them—
The foremost pit, with vacant seat between,
Six or seven benches shall the Hebrews fill—
While, in the rear, the noted Gondoliers
Shall harass them, and beat the clamour down.
Some, of inferior countenance, aloft
At proper intervals—while, through the flying tiers
A few, well dress'd, that may not be suspect,
But aid from love—shall, at convenient times
Select out such men as they think may suit;
Their progress narrowly, noted down,
Before the Doge, the weight imposed of fine,
Shall, from their circumstance, redeem our loss.
We'll have them sure in such sort, and amount,
That should they shrink, we'll be the gainers still.

Furb. Thus directed—shall the inquisitors
Prowl thro' the main tiers—to whose puissance
Our friends at need shall lend a helping hand—
This and ourselves to boot—what think you, Signor?

Count. A good direction, worthy Furbesco,
Distribute each a glass of cordial gin,
And then I'll speak to them—you bring them in—
[*Exit.*

Enriq. This have I just had put into my hand—
Giving a paper.

Count. "*Enriquez, your cause is a hell-running evil,*
"*Set a beggar on horseback he'll ride to the devil.*"
A mere device of the enemy.
But come——

Enter Pugillo, Samullo, Pugno, Mandozzo, Hollando, Golfo, Bracchio, Gondoliers and Venetian Jews, with a Band of Police Men.

Once more unto your posts, dear friends,
Or close our doors up, and sit down to starve.
At common times there's naught becomes a man
Like modest stillness, and humility—
But, when these damn'd dins assail our ears,
Then on the riotous, fasten like the tiger:
Wield your shellalas—summon all your strength—
Let each against his neighbour battle wage,—
Then, Gondoliers, pour ye through the portals,
Like a vast torrent—overwhelm—crush them—
As suddenly as doth, the shore, the encavern'd cliff,
Worne by the wide and wasteful ocean.
Then square your elbows, ply your blows out wide,
Spare not your might to give them their full weight—
Now on, ye noble Bravos—
Whose blood is fetched from fathers of fist proof—
Fathers—that, like so many gladiators,
Have in these parts at morn and even fought—
And ceas'd—till cash hath lack'd—and argument.
Dishonour not your mothers—now attest,
Ye knew not who the fathers that begat you.
And you, ye noble Hebrews! whose limbs
Were made in Venice, shew us here

The mettle of your nation—let us swear,
That you are worth your breeding, which we doubt not.
For there is none of you so mean and base,
But hath an avaricious, greedy eye.—
I see you stand like greyhounds on the slip,
Straining upon the start—the game's afoot—
Follow your spirit—and upon this night—
"God and a testoon for our noble Count."

SCENE III.

Avenues to the Theatre.

Uproar and confusion—Crowd of persons of all kinds—With Bravos, Gondoliers, and Jews.

[*Cries within—Help, help, Pugillo—Ho, Samullo, help.*

Enter GONDOLIER.

Pugno exacts more wonders than a man,
Daring and opposite to every danger—
Now overpower'd—Help!—under foot he fights—
Rescue Mandozzo. [*Exit.*

[*Cries within.*

Hollando's b'set around—

Enter several Bravos and Gondoliers.

1st. Seize him—
2nd. Shame—
3rd. That was he—

[*Cries within.*

Ho! Golfo's beat down—

[*Exeunt.*

Enter FURBESCO, *jumping on a Bench.*

Fight, bully bucks of Venice—fight, brave Pugno—
Strike, Bracchio—Strike Home — Blood—Blood—
there's a head—
Brave Golfo!—ply him well—care nought for
blood—
Down, down that coward with his broken stave—
[*Within.*
Pugillo—Ho! [*Exit.*

Gondoliers dragging several Gentlemen.

Jews. Come, come along—'Tvash you,
1*st.* Aye, it vash him—
2*nd.* I'll shwear that's him—
3*rd.* It vash him—
4*th.* I shwear that beat me doane—
Gentleman. I have struck none—
1*st Jew.* He strike—
2*nd Jew.* He hash—
Gentleman. Not one—
Gondolier. Come, come along,
I'll warrant you we'll cure your bellowing tongue.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

His own private Room.

The COUNT.

Now have we blow for blow, and war for war—
Controlment for controlment—Weapon for
Weapon—force against force—so it should be.

Why, now this tells, and thus we answer you,
Ye growling, gizzard-grumbling mob!
Oh! I could scold you like a very drab—
But, no! blows be our answers now—we'll see
Who will hold longest out—senseless boobies!
Chastisement all around you—o'er your heads
Venetian vengeance trembling hung;
That the least breath shall break the slender hair—
Before you, Achillean myrmidons,
Aided by hosts, and conjoin'd with the force
Of ocean's sons, and Palestine.—Behind,
Hangeth the law—the terrors of exposure—
With fears of prison—and an empty purse—
Oh! that a man, to save an hungry testoon,
Will risk all these, and raise his cry against us:
'Gainst us, the drama's mighty sovereign here.
Yet, shall ye know, that, not in vain, so oft
Have we before you trod in majesty;
Nor sate in state to please—when you shall please:
Ye, with your favours, taught us how to rule—
And think ye we are school boys, ever?—
The lower spokes in turn come uppermost.—
Rome nurs'd Barbarians, and her slaves, with care,
To feed and pamper her luxurious cravings—
They found their strength—the slave the master ruled,
And the Barbarian trampled on them both—
Attained the first—we have the second shunn'd,
By loosing early off the Syren's chains;
I give you thanks for that—there you should stop—

Enter Furbesco *and* Figluo.

So, Furbesco—How came ye on?

Furb. There is a fine harvest glean'd—it will pay,
And many are gone home, much over-paid—

Fig. Our heroes play'd like heroes.
Count. I marked them ;
They play'd the hero well—Come relate—
The hall were sitting ?—
Furb. Aye, Signor.
Fig. And a fine crowd were gathered round the door,
Furb. Some are dismissed on surety—some are held,
'Till morning brings sufficiency of friends.
One churl of the Placarding breed—had been—
Fig. Foh ! how loathsome—
Furb. Posting accusations
Of your giving frankers to Gondoliers,
Hiring them to fight.
Fig. Many, Sir, there were,
Who swore to their being quite pent round with such.—
Furb. By some, were accusations made of blows
Received amid the scuffle ; others, some
Against whom our champions have alledg'd the same.
Heaven only knows if right or wrongfully,
Are bound to answer at their proper time—
Count. But of the Placard wretch ?—
Furb. He said that one
To him unknown, employ'd him—
Count. And what ?—you—
Furb. I said you had not even one—
Would I swear that ? I answered, yes—and did.
Count. You did what you should do. Ask'd they ought more ?
Furb. No.
Fig. It was well they did not—
Count. It was well.

Furb. I feared it much tho'—I did wonder much,
They lacked that wit—
Count. So far, so good—
And now, each night we'll measure thus our strength;
Prolong your contest to whatever length—
You, to your trust be active, quick, and bold,
Against such force as ours they cannot hold:
Farewell—till here to-morrow night we meet.
Why—this is glorious revenge—dear—sweet!
[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A House frequented by Gondoliers on the Banks of the Lake.—A large Room.—Round a Table, Pugillo, Mandozzo, Belchozo, Samullo, Bracchio, Grobbo, Cravno, Hollando, Pittono, Golfo—with Gondoliers and Jews—at side Tables.

Gondolier. Well—Now we're all comfortable again—suppose we have that last stave over again. What say you, Signor Bracchio? No objection to it?—Signor Pugillo have you?—

Pugillo. What says Signor Mandozzo?

Mandoz. Oh no—Lets have it—Come Signor Bracchio, you'll remember its the last bowl—it's good kind of bub, too—

Hollan. I think it is—It's a shame, to drink it dry—let's have a Song—

Cravno. Signor Bracchio.

Bracch. I am at your service, Signors—

Gondo. Aye, Signor, kind—Let's have it—

All. Peace—Silence—Peace—Signor's going to sing—

Grobbo. No noise there—Damn the Jew! Can't he hold his Hebrew jaw?

Jew. He vash note talk for you, Signor—

SONG.

But of all the Counts the Count,
Search all Venice around—
You'll not meet with a match for Orgoglio.
Then fill up—Then fill up the, bowl, high-oh!
Then fill up—Then fill up the bowl, high-oh!
We'll fill out the night,
And old Phœbus's rays,
Shall light us home, Drunk, with Orgoglio's praise,
With Orgoglio's praise.—

Then ye champions of might,
With the sons of the flood,
And old Judah combin'd for Orgoglio's good.
Come fill up the bowl, high oh!—high oh!
Come fill up the bowl, high oh!—high oh!

Chorus. Then fill up—Then fill up, &c.
With Orgoglio's praise.
Then fill up, &c.

All. Bravo—Bravo—Huzza!—Huzza!—

Grob. Well! and I cannot but say—that it would have been very hard to meet with a match for him, either in acting, or any thing—

Gondo. Oh he's a rare Count—

1st Jew. I vash nepher see so fine Conte in all days my life.

2d. Jew. Phery phine Conte inteet.

3d. Jew. Phery inteet fine Conte—

Pugil. Aye, aye, my Signors—Loose him—we sha'nt get such another—

Mand. Come here's to him—

All. Hurra!—Hurra!—Hurra!—

Hol. I say, Signor Bracchio, you're a little bit of a wit too—a bit bigger than I thought you—if that Song's really your own make—

Brac. My own make?—Aye—it's easy enough to make Songs.

Mand. Well! you'll not make a better than that—I know—Will he, Signor, Lando?

Brac. May be not—

Pugil. Come boys—Ready? fill again—we must have Furbesco now—Ready, all?

All. Aye aye, Signor—Hurra!

2d. Gondo. Two's enough for him—we mustn't make him as good as the Count.

1st. Gondo. May be not, but there's no occasion to stint him.

2d. Gondo. I did n't say there was, friend.

Pugil. Give him another!—ready—

All. Hurra!—Very good!—very well done!

Hol. I say—mullo, damme, you'd have been lurch'd, if I had not hutch'd you—

Samul. I can't say but I should, but you know, I stood pillory for you, Signor Lando—

Hol. Aye—I was hard put too—Swearing that—"Never mind"—thought I—What's an Oath?—Not as big as an olive—It can't choak.

Pugil. Never talk of choaking—when one sticks, think, my boys—who it's for.

Mand. Well said, Signor Pugillo—right—think who it's for—Here's just another round—day's peeping.

Pugil. Come Signor Bracchio, let's have t'other verse.

Hol. Last verse to the last glass always.

Pugil. Signor, Mandozzo—I vote to have that Song every night.

Belch. So do I.

All. So all.

Mand. Well, so we will—Signor Bracchio!

Pugil. We're all waiting your Signory.

SONG. *Bracchio.*

What, my boys, have we got to the —— of the bowl,
And is there among you a thirsty soul ?——
'Tis our last—then fill up for Orgoglio.
Oh ! fill up your last to Orgoglio.
And when night shall come round,
This House shall resound,
With the praise of the Count Orgoglio :
For then he shall fill a new bowl, high--oh !
He'll fill us, He'll fill us our bowl, high--oh---
Then we'll fill out the night,
And old Phœbus's rays
Shall light us home drunk with Orgoglio's praise—
With Orgoglio's praise——

Then ye champions of might,
With the sons of the flood,
And old Judah combin'd for Orgoglio's good---
He'll fill up the bowl high-oh ! high-oh !
He'll fill up your bowl, high-oh ! high-oh !

Chorus. For then he shall fill a new bowl, high-oh ! &c.
With Orgoglio's praise——
Then fill up, then fill up the bowl, high-oh ! &c.

All. Bravo—Bravo—Hurra ! Hurra ! Huzza !
Pugil. And now to all fine fellows pastime sweet,
Till here again to morrow night we meet.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Scene draws and discovers a Prison, small and confined, with dungeon windows, two seats with a table.

LEORDO.

Is this, Venice ?—this, the State of Freedom ?

This, the City—that above the world
Vaunted her liberty?—That, while around
Others have bow'd their necks to foreign Lords,
And states the yoke of subjugation wear,
Tinsell'd, and deck'd with ornaments, to hide,
To cover, from their own unwilling eye,
The odious badge, hath, on from age to age,
Upon her sea-girt rock, her eagle wing
Plumed, and preserv'd her freedom?—this the great,
The ocean's mighty mistress, whose proud barks
Of meanest size, have lower'd the haughty flag
From her foes highest topmasts—
Boasting her Sons enfranchisers and free?
Am I her Son—I a Venetian born—
Or, hath my poor country been translated
Into some foreign land of despotism!
What hast thou done, Leordo: What thy crime
That, thus imprison'd with the out-cast herd,
Whose nature so assimilate to the gloom
Of iron-grated vaults, can scarce exist,
Breathing the purer element at large—
What blot, what stain on honesty, and nature,
Hast thou affix'd on thine?—O memory!
By heaven given to man to teach him
From the past—to ope to him the book, closed
To consciousness, to tell the mental eye
What time hath there recorded; that, from thence
Man may learn wisdom, and in what he reads
May see his future lot of happiness
Or misery—Say, faithful monitor,
What is there written, that deserves this Dungeon?
What crime—what murder, robbery, is recorded—
What breach of honesty—what shame of manhood—
That with wretches, guilty of these, thou art
Become associate?—O Law! ordain'd
Of Heaven to make man happy—to give peace,

Protection to the good—How art thou made
Sanction of villains!—Yet thee I blame not:
It is the plunderer, under thy name
That masks his villainy—whose tyrant arm,
Under thy sacred mantle shielded close,
Thine iron mace, forg'd first to batter down
The towers of injustice, wields aloft,
Protective of oppression— to insult
Innocence, helplessness, and peace, and right—
'Tis him I curse, and mourn that it should be.
Yet, why Leordo? Why desponding? tho'
Thy country's Justice for a moment slumbers,
Shall it not fall, with tenfold vengeance,
Roused as a giant from refreshing sleep,
On them that have unlawfully usurp'd?
Then bear thee like a man—thou art not sole
And unaccompanied in this. Yet, 'tis
A sickening thought—that one, a vagrant born,
Whose heart a man might coin for specie
'Tis so metallized, and whose blood for drachms,
Aye current, might be dropp'd, should bear it thus—
Ye gods can this be Venice?

[*Door unlocks.*

Enter Jailor with AGOSTO.

Jailor. Sir, I thought perhaps, alone, you would be dull,
And, as another gentleman was here,
That wants a room; and you had another chair—
Perhaps you would not be offended, if
I took the liberty to bring him up—
He seems a gentleman—but he has got no money, sir—

Agos. Therefore it was, I asked,
Hearing that you were here, and in much like
Unfortunate case, tho' not so bad as I am,
To speak with you—and this good man, tho' more
From expectation of another fee,
Than perhaps goodness, brought me hither—
Sir, will your kindness furnish me the means,
To purchase such accommodation as I can:
I am moneyless—

Leor. Sir, this dungeon
Is free to you, as to myself; nay more,
I shall be glad of your society
The few hours we are fellow-prisoners.

Goal. That I can't allow, sir,—'it's against rules,
To give these liberties—besides, sir—it's our—
We have it for perquisites—

Leor. Accept, sir,
From me, whatever is your need—I'll ask
The like return of you, should we meet here ever again—

Agos. I am much a debtor
To your kindness—Here, fellow:

Goal. That's the way
You Gentlemen always speak to us, when you have gotten from us what you want.

Agos. Are you not satisfied?

Goal. Why—Yes—I am—
It's—just—sir—

Agos. Well?— [*Exit Goaler.*
Sir, I thank you much more than I can say—

Leor. You have said too much
Already, I am mu ore than repaid
In your soc hat a place
wo Venetians.

Agos. It is, sir—who may say, whom they may meet,
And in what kind of place—since we meet thus—
And as I heard below, for the same cause.
This is a sorry mode of setting about
To win the public favour.
Leor. 'Tis, indeed—
Why did you not, sir, ask for me before?
You must have been much, and evil treated.—
Agos. Some little in truth—I yestereven went
Without purse to the Theatre, taking
Just for admission's need, I was seiz'd
For—groaning disapprobation!!—ruffianed—
Dragg'd to the hall of justice—and brought here
For want of friends to be my sureties.
While I was there, a scoundrel—ill-looking,
Whom I had never seen, or seen unknowingly,
Recognized me—charg'd me with striking him—
Swore to the charge—described the weapon too—
Another in support, swore to my person—
Adding, that I had used much gross abuse.—
I had but just entered the Theatre:—
Separated in the hubbub from my friends,
I was refused, to send to any of them—
Depriv'd of any mode of liberation,
Since none were present that knew me,
And thus, utterly innocent of aught
That could have brought me hither, kept—obliged,
My hands cuffed, through the public streets to walk,
Just like a common miscreant—brought—
And thrust into a hole—for my last stiver
I got a bed!!—Now—when I had risen,
I was turn'd below—left [illegible] the herd
Of pick-pockets, and of [illegible]eets,
That yesterday and ni[illegible]
To them that were be[illegible]

No seat—money had I not to purchase—
And there I must have staid, but, that I heard
Mention accidentally of you—

Leor. Tho' not harder I was more unjustly
And full as partially treated—I find
I have been watched before.—And now, last night
Knocking against the floor with my battoon,
And hissing, I was mark'd again. A Paper—
A Placard it was—passing round the tier,
Came to my hand—One at a distance beckon'd
That I would reach it on to him—I did.
Better to pass, I put it on my stick—
Then I was seized, struck by a staff and dragg'd
Forth from the box, my clothes torn as you see—
'Twas wonder that I found my purse not gone—
And taken to the magistracy—There
Were these things magnified to riotous conduct,
I to prison sent for want of surety.
One that knew me well by reputation,
A gentleman, that was by, offered himself,
And was refused alone—he proffer'd then
Double the sum requir'd—He doubled that,
For my appearing, but there—this morning!—
He was refused, and I must take my choice,
To walk as you did hither, or to ride.
I chose the latter, and by luck escap'd
So bad a lot as fell to you—My friends,
I know, will not be late this morning
To procure me my release—

Agos. Mine know not,
Except by guess, where I may be!

Leor. No matter—
You shall with me! we will find surety for you—

Enter Goaler.

Goal. Sir, you are wanted—there's the Officer
That brought you here.

Leor. We go both together.
Goal. No, sir. He is not wanted.
Leor. He may go,
Surely, with me below?
Goal. Yes, sir—that—
Leor. Then cheer you, sir, my friends shall all be yours.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Judgment Hall.

The Doge and Council as Judges—on one side are the Lawyers and Witnesses of the Count, with FURBESCO. *On the other,* LEORDO, AGOSTO, GIUGLIO, *and other Friends of* LEORDO.

Doge. Proclaim silence—
Crier. Silence—Every one keep peace.
Doge. Whose is this suit?
Crier. Signor Orgoglio's,
Against the Signor Leordo—brought,
For riot, and illegal public conduct.—
Doge. Where are the sureties for the Signor? Call—
Giug. and another Gent. Here, my Lords—
[*They stand out.*
Crier. Produce the accused.
Leor. Here—
[*Stands out.*
Crier. Are you the Signor Leordo?
Leor. I am.
Crier. Signor Leordo, you are commanded,
Stand forth and hear your accusation read:
Defend yourself, and abide the judgment
You shall hear—You are acquit of your bond,
[*To the Sureties.*
And may retire from hence at your pleasure—

Doge. Signor Leordo—you—descended from
A family, noble, and should also be
Honourable, are brought here before us—
Charged, by credible witness, of riot
And of illegal conduct: you, Signor,
Are further charged with, contrary to law,
Aiding in great and dangerous rioting,
Preventing plays, and frequence of the Theatre,
All to procure the ruin of the owners,
To whom we have given our special privilege;
And whom we hold thence in our protection.—
These things, our minister of police hath
Certified to us, were sworn before him.
Answer to the charge—produce your witnesses—
Defend yourself—and abide our judgment.
Are you content?

Leor. My Lords—to answer here,
Before such noble judges; to abide
Their judgment, which cannot but be most just;
Must work to my contentment, did nought else
Lend its enforcement to the strength of these.
Weak, my Lords, am I in words—quite unskilled,
Other than to recount a simple tale—
Young, and in legal science not adept,
Unstudied in its intricacies—further, than
Becoming youth of noble parentage,
Not to seem quite unlearned of the law
Of that dear city, whose enfranchisement
In thousand ways, in which the world are slaves,
Is his heart's greatest pride: his reading there,
Not with discernment, nicely to perplex
With verbal nicetres; his judgment rather
Exercising, to learn, how more blessed
Himself than men of other nations; how,
Equal with other citizens as man;
By birth superior, how, beneath their rank

Sinking—still lower, by what height his crime,
Piles ignominy upward—then noble,
As most truly you have said, Lord Duke,
Only, when virtuous and honourable.
A malefactor here to be arraigned,
Cannot but cause him sorrow,
Had caused Leordo grief;—but, consciousness,
Aided by memory's most prying eye,
Gives, at his own conscience' bar, acquittal
Of any stain on honour; gives the lie
To every imputation urged against him:
There justified, most cheerfully he meets
All that the world combined may charge against
him,
And much it glads him, that he meets it here;
Brightening his contentment into joy.
That I was—and at the times complained of—
At the place—is most true:—I was there twice.
That I was endeavouring to prevent
The play, is also true—and more—I strove,
Not to procure the ruin of the owners,
But, to prevent their impositions:
That your favour should not be abused.—
But, that I did strive illegally,
I do deny, my Lords—That I did riot,
Is most false—and they do know it falsehood,
That swore it for the truth.—There they all stand,
And, if before your honourable presence
I shall speak aught of contradiction,
Let them stand forth before you—then of each,
Judge, who hath likelier countenance of truth.—

Doge. Leordo—Remember these have given
Their testimony upon oath—you know,
Your bare assertion cannot much enforce
Against such testimony.

Leor. There are here—
Lord Duke, it is most true:—I could not think,
Nor would I dare to ask your judgment
On mine own word.—Two gentlemen, whom chance
Placed in the common box beside my friends,
They will speak to it. And, if there be doubt,—
Let them be ordered forth the court meanwhile,
And afterward be questioned—Or, if
Indulgence, Signors, may extend to that,
Not trenching upon justice—they will, I know,
Inform you true, where I shall wander falsely.
Doge. They may remain—proceed, Signor.
Leor. The crime,
For which, I, before your gracious presence,
Stand to excuse myself, by brief statement
Of the whole fact, to its most full extent,
And object shewn; unless my promising hope
Prove much a traitor to me; this great mountain! shall
Prove to you a shadow.—Of short time past,
The purchase of admission to the Theatre,
Under your late given privilege, has been
Increased in uniform proportion.
That the whole city deem'd it imposition,
Your Signories must have known: since, yourselves
Gave orders, that the people should have shewn
Full cause, and reason, for their satisfaction.
They have shewn cause—but reason they shew none:
For insufficient reason, is no reason,—
Who shall be satisfied with insufficiency?—
Their avarice cannot—their pride will not—
Their arrogance disdains us satisfaction.
I was dissatisfied. To their own house
I had resort, there to express my judgment:
I sought no means, but such as nature gave,

And custom warranted. For better shew,
Wherefore they disapproved, some were there,
Wrote their opinions, handing them about
That others might discern if they agreed;
The audience seemed unanimous to condemn:
For, when these papers some held up aloft,
The assentive shout would rend the theatre:—
I, with my battoon, struck upon the floor,
To aid the noise—Is that against the law?—
When Thespis first exhibited his cart,
The Athenian sage expressed his strong reproof,
Striking, in wrath, his staff upon the ground.—
Shall, when a Legislator hath so done,
Who then was but an individual,
A person, like myself, yet, far more wise,
Renown'd in wisdom, peaceable, and grave;
Who, for these qualities, was chosen from all
That Greece possessed of wisdom, by the wise,
To legislate for Athens—mistress she
Of ocean—free, as Venice now—
Shall I, for that, for which he was applauded
Of Senators and grey-beard Seniors,
Condemned be of tumult and of riot?—
Where is the law?—where, amid all the code,
The pandects that have force, where, the decree—
And of what mighty power, that calls this riot,—
That stamps the act illegal,—or that brands
The actor of it, traitor to the law?—
Is there such things at Venice?—
But, my Lords—more:—upon my stick, I passed
On to a further part one of these papers—
And is civility grown to a crime in Venice?
Shall no man reach unto another's asking
Aught on a stick—Is that too riot?—
That I did cause a riot, is most true;
I did not raise one.—They—the peaceful men,
The men in silky furs,—Skulking along the tiers,
As, prowling thro' a garden, oft, the eye

Of keen Grimalkin fixed on some poor bird,
That chirps his natural music to the concert
Of finer songsters round him—in his heart
Devote to pitiless slaughter—skulks along
The sleek-skinn'd cat—and, at the moment meet,
Springs on the caitiff with unerring claw:—
'Twas such, who made the hubbub.
Pouring round me—in the clenched gripe
Of numbers, at one spring, I found me seized—
Ruffianed—beaten down—torn thence—accused
Of causing riot.—My most learned Lords,
There was a Gentleman—

Doge. Signor, stop there—
Speak of yourself alone.

Leor. Most gracious Sir,
The Gentleman is present here—

Doge. Is it,
What of yourself relates, that you would speak?

Leor. Not of what I did suffer, but of what
I should; and what he did, that had not means
To purchase better.

Doge. That we cannot hear,
Leordo, to yourself—

Leor. If these few facts,
Which I have spoken of briefly, do appear
Of riotous sort, in your unerring judgment—
I must submit: but, by your leave, would speak
Somewhat of motive, and a word of right,
Perhaps of wrong to some—but, that I'll not—
I would not owe recrimination that,
Which mine own thought tells me must be my right,
If you afford your credence to my speech.
My Lords, I humbly do submit myself—

Doge. What, sir, have you to answer unto these?
[*To Furbesco.*

Furb. My Lords, I would that you would ask the truth
From these his witnesses—

Leor. Stand forth, Gentlemen,
[*Two Gentlemen stand out.*
Answer freely—have I spoken truth—all truth?
Doge. Signors, what say you to these things?
1*st Gentleman.* My Lords,
The facts are all as stated by Leordo.
2*d Gentleman.* All, to a tittle: he doth nothing swell,
Nor aught exaggerate in fact.
Doge. And you believe his whole intention clear?
1*st Gentleman.* I do believe in that he hath said truly.—
Doge. Stand back awhile—
[*Consults with the other Judges.*
Who hath more to urge us?—
Leor. Myself have nothing more on this matter.
Doge. Leordo—we do acquit, and wholly
Clear you of the charge preferr'd against you:
And are right glad to find you stand so clear.
Are all content? [*After a pause.*
Leor. My gracious Lords—
If, after hearing me in this defence,
On mine own faith you have pronounced me,
Innocent of the charge—might you permit me
An audience of your patience, I shall be
Debtor to your kindness much.—I would not
Rebut, by accusation, charge of guilt;
And make myself seem clean, in that I made
My enemies the blacker—then, hear me,
I do beseech your Highnesses,
While some few circumstances I relate,
Such, as perhaps your Lordships not suspect—
And I speak now, since, I see, they remain
That may reply to me, or bear the truth
In free report unto their master.—
Doge. What is it you would say? Proceed, Signor.

Leor. Sirs, it may seem strange—'tis not less true,—
There is a secret—I am heir to wealth—
'Tis feared, that these must yield their imposition:
They aimed to frighten by an extreme rigour;
They hoped for forfeit sureties—then they hoped,
Oh, disappointed hope!—for heavy fine.—
Doge. What, is this so?— [*To Furbesco.*
What's your proof, Signor? [*To Leordo.*
[*Giuglio steps forward.*
What, Sir, know you of this?
Giug. My Lords, the matter
Is of fact—motives—are private judgment.
Doge. How do you judge the motive?
Giug. They refused,
Signors, two thousand double ducats—but
For one night's surety.—
Doge. How!
Furb. Sirs, it was numbers.
He who made the offer was alone.
Giug. Sirs,
I made it—tho' a stranger to the Signor,
Because I saw there was injustice on him.
Doge. Proceed, Signor.
Leor. After this refusal,
I was taken—thanks to my purse, not dragged—
In hopes of money, I was given my choice—
To common prison—there, I was excused,
Because I paid for a private dungeon,
The being confined amongst the felons:
This Gentleman was thrust down amongst them,
The common scum of Venice!—for no more crime.
Those, who accused him, were common bravos,
Gondoliers, hired and paid to fight—to beat
All who shewed symptoms of disapprobation;
All who opposed the great Theatric Count.
Doge. Can these things be?
Agos. My Lords—yes—worse than these—

Giug. Some there are lie there yet—
Leor. There was a time,
Most reverend Signors, when, in pagan Rome,
Nero disgraced the imperial purple;
From his own throne, a Cæsar could descend
To court applause—the monarch of the stage!—
Yet, though he met the universal hiss,
His acting was so villainous—even when
Each day gave hundreds to proscription's sword,
That otherwise offended him—yet read we not
Of all the thousand persons that condemned
Their buskin'd Emperor—nay, treated him
As tho' he meanest were, as he was worst—
That one incurred his anger.—He was proud
When applause hailed him—he enjoyed the hiss!—
Yet, Count Orgoglio, beneath the cloak
Of privileg'd favour, turns the tortuous law,
That he may be,—not play,—the tyrant here.
Shall it be borne, that one, a few years since,
Vagrant, dependant on necessity,
Who hath grown rich, and fed upon our bounty,
Yet but a player, should become a Prince?—
None than myself would give his merit more,
Did to himself he arrogate less praise.—
Justice is justice—But, when a man sets
A nation at defiance, when the servant
With iron rod would rule above his master,
Society is verging toward dotage!
When men of low estate are arrogant,
It argues them above the need of that
Whereby they climbed—Meek lowliness no more
Is worth the entertaining!—My good Lords,
The people are not satisfied—that they
Did not grow rich on antecedent profits,
And needed not the more. The way is easy—
A full disclosure would have satisfied.—

Doge. These are indeed abuses of our privilege,
Enough to raise a city up against them;
What say you to them, Sir—you are party
I do remember to the Theatre?

Furb. I am, my Lord, a most inferior party,
And cannot answer to such things as these.

Doge. Hie you hence—go to your master—tell him,
He hath incurred our vehement displeasure:
Tell him what you have heard—we shall require
From him an answer to them. Go warn him.—
If such abuse grow out from privilege,
If he so use our gracious smile upon him,
We must resume our given protection;
And since this public evil rise from us,
Privately, of prerogative—ourselves
Will take strict measures for inquiring truly.

[*Exit Furb.*

Leor. Signors, one thing more—Theatres have been
The schools, in every age, as well of vice,
As of refinement—public virtue—taste.
'Twas privacy at Roman Theatres
Sowed deep the seeds of profligacy—seeds
Of unseen growth at first—of certain shooting,
Irradicate, and irresistible—
These are transplanted hither!
Solon foretold the after-fate of Athens,
And Thespis' cart did prove its utter ruin;
It was the stage he censured, not the man.
The Theatre I censure, and the man.
The private tiers are nurseries of vice—
Hotbeds of adultery.—It grows rank,
In the close atmosphere: and every man,
Laying his hand upon his heart, that says,
I do approve of privacy—yet am
Most zealous son of Venice—either is

False to the very core—a trait'rous son,
Or weak in judgment, and an useless.
When privacy at Rome was most approved,
Actors were Princes—Emperors were their rivals,
And thought no scorn—the golden palm contesting.
But, till that time, lived actors as they ought.
Our actors now are higher than our princes:
Our princes own them subject to the law;
Our actors, lawless, are above all law!
My Lords, I crave your pardon for transgression,
I humbly meant—but to submit to you
That, as a man born free, and, here at Venice
A son of nobles, that may hereafter
Be himself such, has thought to be his duty.

Doge. You have our thanks, and all our commendations
For your proceeding. Other some there be,
Who have transgressed the freedom of the free.—
Break up the court.—

[*Exeunt Doge and Council.*

Giug. Noble Leordo, thanks—
Thee, Venice, with her worthiest, noblest, ranks:—
While proud Orgoglio shall repent the hour
He changed unreal to unlawful power. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Count's R[illegible]

Enter the COUNT, *followed by* FURBESCO.

Furb. Take comfort, Sir—let it not break you thus—

Count. Oh! talk not now of comfort—

[*Throws himself on a Sopha.*

Shut again—
Again shut up!—Leordo too—that worm—

That nothing—whom few nights ago beheld
Petitioning for favour, and refused!
Oh! that a reptile can afflict us thus!—
Furb. Sir, if the fly but fasten on the elephant,
On, of all beasts the noblest—'tis his death—
It is a small worm that destroys the oak—
Count. Why dost thou comfort thus?—oh! give me words
Hotter than burning oil—than scalding pitch—
Hotter than new-forg'd thunder—horrid oaths—
That I may blast him!—Go—Orgoglio—go—
Prepare thy coffin—hide thee from the world—
The ungrateful world—that, on thy silvering age,
Turns its rude back, and treats thee with unkindness.
I'll live no more—I'll act to them no longer—
I'll be revenged—I'll kill myself outright—
Then, how shall Venice live without Orgoglio?
I'll die—I'll die—when I can do no longer!
I have a thought—I will be buried
In mine own coffer:—then, can no one say,
Spending his money, "This was Count Orgoglio."
Go, go, Furbesco—we must give account—
Prepare confessionals—our salaries
Reduce—give up our prices—live henceforth
Like other men—as other actors do—
Stand—and be damned—and say, "Good Sirs, I thank you."
Take kicks and hisses from the very geese,
From asses—apes—and sputtering monkeys!—
Dreadful—dreadful doom!—
Oh, how unjust! how tyrannic! how hard!
That we cannot rule Venice as we please!
[*Curtain drops.*

THE END.

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